



Allandale Neighbor

Oct 2015
Vol 30, Issue 5

DISTRIBUTED TO MORE THAN 4,500 HOMES BY THE ALLANDALE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

I Want Your Backyard

Allan McMurty

Imagine waking up one morning to see construction in the backyard next to you. The forms are laid and the concrete is poured. As near as you can tell, this is an addition to the house. As the building begins to rise, you grow concerned about what it actually is. Your neighbor's front house and your house are one story, but this unit rises to two stories.

A staircase is fixed to the side of the structure facing you with a large landing at the top with a minimum set back of five feet. A new gate appears next to your bedroom window. Upon completion, you realize this is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). A group of five college kids move

in or maybe the owners rent it out every weekend as a short-term rental (STR). Since the ADU is within a quarter of a mile of a "transportation corridor," no new parking spaces are required and the narrow street in front of your house now

Continued on page 3

Neighborhood Update: Austin Oaks Charrette

Kata Carbone

Save the Date: During the week of January 24–29, 2016, the owner of the Austin Oaks site and the neighborhood stakeholders surrounding the site will participate in a design charrette in a collaborative effort to create a consensus-based design for the site. Both the owner and the neighborhood representatives working on the charrette planning see this as an opportunity to use innovative collaborative design as a means of moving forward.

Continued on page 11

Renew Your ANA Membership Today!

As we close out 2015, it is the perfect time to renew your membership to the Allandale Neighborhood Association, which is on a calendar year cycle. We unfortunately do not have any automated prompts or reminders –yet! (teaser alert: new website coming soon!)— so it's up to each of us to remember, around January 1, that it's time to contribute to supporting this neighborhood again. Just go to <http://www.allandaleneighbor.com/> and click on the pay now button in the top right.

IF YOU ACT NOW, and pay by March 31, you will get the current rate of \$15 per household, \$7 for seniors.

Continued on page 3

Table of Contents:

President's Letter	2
Meet Your New ANA Executive Committee (EC) Continued	5
Allandale Outside: Fall & Winter, a Good Time to Plant and Transplant .7	
Neighbor Spotlight: Cold Caps Assistance Projects Helps Cancer Patients Keep Hair	9
Dog Talk – Dogs and Storms	11
Gullett Good News.	12
More Gullett Good News: Girl Scout Troops Are Growing!	13
All About Lamar	14
It's Knight Time – McCallum Updates.	14
Neighborhood Watch	16
"The Water Bill Is Too Damn High!"	18
Shoal Creek Conservancy Hosts Fall Walking Tours	21
Allandale Neighbors Top Trojan Pop Warner Scholar Athletes!	21
Lamar's Jazz Factory is Chicago Bound.	22

The annual and much talked about **Allandale Tree Pruning Seminar** returns again Saturday, **January 23**, featuring Tree Celebrity Don Gardner educating us all at Shoal Creek Nursery at 2710 Hancock Dr. Last year, a standing-room-only crowd of over 40 learned from Don, and this was absolutely free to ANA members, and only \$5 for other attendees. Please join us January 23 at 10:00 a.m. for this year's seminar.

The Allandale Neighbor
is published bimonthly by the
Allandale Neighborhood Association (ANA)

www.allandaleneighbor.com

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DESIGN Cathy Savage
PRINTER Worley Printing

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
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Preston Scott Ehlers, Jean
Latsha, Kyle McAden and
Carla Penny

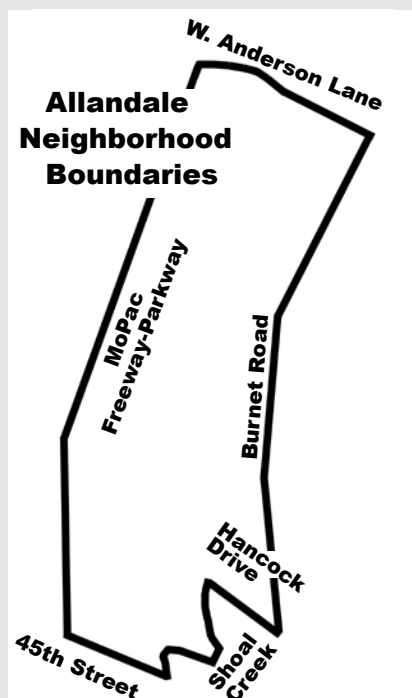
ANA Executive Committee meetings are held on the
first Wednesday of the month at NW Rec Center.
General Membership meetings are held in March and
September.

Committees

BYLAWS Marshall Thompson
COMMUNICATIONS Laura Beck
FINANCE Elliot Brubaker
MEMBERSHIP TBD
NOMINATING TBD
SAFETY Laura DiCarlo
ZONING & PLANNING Jean Latsha
ANC REP David Orshalick

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austintexas.gov](mailto:joshua.metteauer@austintexas.gov)



President's Letter

Mike Nink, 512-656-0058 or allandale.neighborhood@gmail.com

Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop
and look around once in a while, you
could miss it.

Things are moving and changing fast
in Austin and Allandale—make sure you
stop to look around and let your voice be
heard.

One change I'm happy to announce is
the new Allandale website, which should
be operational by mid-2016. The new site
will allow neighbors to set up special
interest groups, find local services and
businesses, and have a better and more
integrated membership management sys-
tem. And, we said earlier, prompt us with
automatic reminders for membership
dues renewals. A big thank you to our
neighbor Tom Linehan who graciously
built and maintained our original site for
years.

I'm extremely excited to report the final
retirement and payment of the Wal-Mart
legal debt which dates back to 2007 and
was originally \$87,774. I want to thank
all the neighbors who have donated over
the years to help pay down and pay off
the debt.

We can expect a lot of issues to impact

our neighborhood in 2016. Some of these
will include the re-emergence of the City's
Burnet Road Corridor plan; the initial
unveiling of CODENEXT, which deter-
mines how land can be used throughout
the city, including what can be built,
where it can be built, and how much can
(and cannot) be built; the future plans for
the pool at Northwest Park; and possibly
more discussion on Short Term Rentals
and Accessory Dwelling Units.

We want to keep our neighborhood a
family friendly, active and close knit
neighborhood where we feel safe to walk
the streets and have children play in our
parks and ride bikes on our streets.

We Need You.

We need you to renew your member-
ship in the Association—only though our
strength in numbers can we influence
decisions at City Hall. We need you to
donate an hour or two of time to help
with Fourth of July Parade and the annu-
al garage sale. We need you to show up
and get involved—attend a general mem-
bership meeting of the neighborhood
association. We need you to talk to your

neighbors, be vigilant and look
for things that are out of place.

As always, if you have
thoughts on what we can be
doing better, I'd like to know.
Feel free to call me or email me
anytime. Thank you! ❖

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* a 10% discount is offered on three or more ads.

Renew Your ANA Membership Today!

Continued from front page

On April 1, for the first time in 7 years, we will raise the ANA membership rates to \$20 per household and \$10 for seniors. So renew NOW.

Why are we raising the rates?

It's pretty darn low anyway and we haven't raised it in years! Yet the value of Allandale surely has increased, right? And with that, comes needs for your ANA. We are regularly defending this neighborhood, our lots, our trees, and our lovely lifestyle against big growth that doesn't always support what we believe we all love about Allandale. As in these past months, we will be facing big issues upcoming, whether it is the Austin Oaks or Bull Creek PUDs, or CodeNext and its challenges to SF2, our zoning, our deed restrictions. ANA is not against growth or density, not against STR or ADUs, or mixed use properties IF DONE RIGHT. It's just that often, the

rush –and money– of development and growth doesn't factor in critical things this ANA defends on Allandale's behalf.

Your membership and your dues help ANA have a strong voice at city hall, help Allandale be a neighborhood that grows the way we want it to grow. We need your help and support!

Why should I be an official (paying) member of ANA?

You are right, without paying a dime you get this newsletter every other month, you can access whatever information you need from our ANA website and Facebook page, and you get the benefit of living in the best neighborhood in Austin (though we are admittedly biased). 4,500 homes comprise Allandale and only about 10% are ANA members, only about 500 homes paid dues in 2015. An even

smaller number of neighbors volunteer their time and efforts on committees, as block captains, to put together our Fourth of July parade, to attend city hall meetings, and to put together this newsletter, among countless other things. A small, simple, and affordable way you can support these efforts is by paying annual dues as an ANA member.

Your membership, your dues help ANA be the neighborhood we want it to be. We need your help and support! Please renew your ANA membership today. Thank you! ❖



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I Want Your Backyard

Continued from front page

has five new cars parked along it. Further, the new impervious cover is funneling additional storm water right into your yard. Late on weekend nights you hear Stone Temple Pilots playing and you learn City of Austin enforcement is slow and ill equipped to solve any of these problems. Not a good situation, and nearly ours.

On November 19, 2015, the Austin City Council, following the guidance of Mayor Steve Adler, accepted a compromise and narrowly rejected a bid to include up to 70,000 single family lots in SF-2 zoning in the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) category. The Neighborhood Subcommittee of the City Council had introduced an ordinance from a resolution backed by former Council Members who were not reelected. This resolution grew into a proposed ordinance covering Neighborhood Plans, STRs and ADUs in SF-3 zoning, parking, and the creation of duplex zoning for areas like Allandale, North Shoal Creek, and scores of neighborhoods across Austin.

The amendment by Mayor Adler at least preserved some single-family lots in Austin, but the fly in the ointment with ADUs is that they exist in an unplanned manner with unintended consequences. ADUs are being sold as affordable, whereas large, credible studies indicate ADUs rented out are not rented out below market rates, certainly not affordable. Further, ADUs, when tied to the front house, avoid the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing requirements.

As you dig deeper, the problems grow. The blanket inclusion of all SF-3 zoning into the ADU sphere includes Northwest Hills, Tarrytown, much of east, south central and central Austin, and means that deed restrictions, neighborhood plans, and transit nodal options are mere words on a paper. A number of neighborhoods had opted in for ADUs, and the zoning currently on the books in Austin is sufficient to double the population within the city limits, but that carried no weight with the majority of council members (Council Member Poole voted to take out SF-2 zoning [Allandale's] and pushed for a delay to allow more study).

The Allandale Neighborhood Association vigorously opposed inclusion of the

ADUs in Allandale because of both the deed restrictions and the current SF-2 zoning. By including SF-2 for ADUs, Austin would have been left with maybe 2% of the city single-family residential use only. Besides fragmenting existing zoning and neighborhoods plans, ADUs remain highly intrusive.

For now, Allandale is safe from ADUs, but the fight is not over, as Austin is considering a rewrite of the Land Development Code (LDC). Already suggestions are being made that single-family zoning is antithetical to a growing, urban city. So, we'll be back before Council someday soon debating the basic fairness of allowing one person to materially affect the quality of life of five surrounding lots under the false assumption that ADUs would be built to rent below market rates.

Editor's Note: We want to thank Allan for his efforts, along with fellow neighbor Peggy Maceo, who worked tirelessly to represent Allandale's best interest in the recent ADU discussions at City Hall, including a one hour meeting with our Mayor. If Allandale (and SF2) "dodged a bullet" for now, it is likely thanks to Allan and Peggy! ❖





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Meet Your New ANA Executive Committee (EC) Continued

Laura Beck

Last issue we reminded you that the ANA EC is a volunteer group of neighbors representing 4,500 homes. We work hard to ensure diversity among our EC, especially geographically, so we cover all sections of Allandale (one of the largest neighborhoods in Austin). Last issue, we introduced you to two of the new additions (as of October 1) to the EC. This issue, meet the other two: Preston Scott Ehlers and Kyle McAden, who are at your service, along with eight others, until Sept 30 2016.

Scott Ehlers

Scott is an attorney and public policy expert with twenty years of experience in policy analysis, government



relations and legislative advocacy.

He has lived in Allandale since 2008 with his wife and son (a Gullett Gecko!) and dog Awesome.

Scott loves Allandale's ranch-style homes (what's left of them, as he says); big old trees; central location; proximity to good beer, restaurants, shopping, and schools; Northwest Park and the pool; vibrant exercise scene in the neighborhood; and Gullett Elementary.

His favorite time in Allandale is the Fourth of July parade, especially his first when his son Gus won second place for his tricked out tricycle!

Kyle McAden

Kyle's background is commercial construction management with experience in interiors, ground up and high tech construction.

He's the father of two young children, and has been married for six years to wife, Katharine.

Kyle loves that each time he and his kids walk down the street in Allandale, they make friends with a new neighbor! They know almost everyone on the block after four years and have made great friends.



His favorite time in Allandale is Austin Marathon day. His house is two down from Great Northern and they can watch and host marathon watchers from their driveway. ❖

photo by alison narro

haley, do-gooder ladybird, \$44

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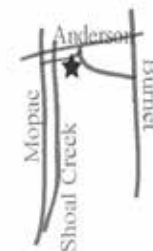
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Neighborhood Update: Austin Oaks Charrette

Continued from front page

Austin Oaks is a 31-acre office park located at the southwest corner of Spicewood Springs Road and MoPac. The development, built between 1973 and 1985, currently includes 12 buildings and encompasses 445,322 square feet. It features many heritage trees, providing the neighborhoods with an office complex that blends in with the community.

The property was purchased in 2013 by Twelve Lakes LLC, an affiliate of Spire Realty Group. In 2014, Spire sought to rezone the property to redevelop the site as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) with approximately 1.6 million square feet of office and retail uses and several hundred apartments. The proposal and its impacts sparked neighborhood opposition to the rezoning.

At the suggestion of neighborhood representatives, Spire agreed to engage in an alternative to conventional negotiations for the redevelopment of the property

and try a design-based approach: a design charrette. A charrette is a multi-day design exercise that brings neighbors together with a multidisciplinary team of designers, engineers, and other specialists to produce a design for the property. During the charrette, the designers and charrette participants plan the site using a collaborative process. Throughout the process, participants provide input, ideas, and feedback to the design team. Various redevelopment scenarios are reviewed against agreed-upon objectives and measures, refining and revising as appropriate.

Neighborhood representatives and the owner have hired Doug Farr, FAIA (Fellow of the American Institute of Architects) (<http://farrside.com>), from Chicago as the design facilitator for the charrette, and the Austin firm TBG Partners (<http://tbg-inc.com>) has been hired as the design team. Doug Farr and the professionals at TBG are among leading urban design architects and landscape architects in the United States.

The charrette is scheduled for January 24–29, 2016 at the Austin Oaks site

(3721 Executive Center Dr., Suite 264, Meredith Building). Prior to the charrette week, there will be neighborhood meetings, including two workshops that gather neighborhood input on vision and values regarding the site. After the charrette, the owner and neighborhood representatives will use the output of the charrette to collaboratively develop the zoning ordinance to be proposed to the City for the redevelopment by February 26, 2016.

More information on the charrette process may be found on the NWACA (Northwest Austin Civic Association) website at <http://tinyurl.com/CharretteProcess> and on the National Charrette Institute website at <http://www.charretteinstitute.org/charrette.html>.

Important Dates

Community Information Meetings: Please attend one of these meetings to learn about the process and how neighbors can contribute to the Vision and Values Workshops. Neighborhood representatives will be there to provide information and answer questions.

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Tuesday, December 1, 6:00–8:00 p.m.
at St. Mathew's Episcopal Church, 8134
Mesa Drive, Room B-18

Wednesday, December 2, 11:30 a.m.–
1:30 p.m. at St. Mathew's Episcopal
Church, 8134 Mesa Drive, Room B-18

*[Note: We posted this information earlier on
all our online venues—website, Facebook,
Yahoo newsgroups—but by the time the
newsletter reaches your mailboxes, the com-
munity info meetings will be over. Please
don't let that stop you from attending the
next workshop and the actual charrette.]*

Neighborhood Vision and Values
Workshops: Please participate in one of
these meetings to provide input.

Wednesday, December 16, 6:00–9:00
p.m. at St. Mathew's Episcopal Church,
8134 Mesa Drive, in Huffman Hall

Tuesday, January 12, 11:30 a.m.– 1:30
p.m. at the Austin Board of Realtors, 4800
Spicewood Springs Road, Auditorium A

Charrette Design Workshop: Addition-
al information will be forthcoming about
how neighbors can participate, as the
workshop schedule is finalized.

January 24–29 at Austin Oaks, Mere-
dith Building (Building #11), Suite 264,
located at 3721 Executive Center Drive
Mission Statement for the Austin Oaks
Charrette: Create a redevelopment plan
for the Austin Oaks site that satisfies the
values of the neighborhood stakeholders
and is economically feasible.

For more information, please contact
us at aucharretteinfo@gmail.com. ❖

Allandale Outside: Fall & Winter, a Good Time to Plant and Transplant

Ginger Soule

Planning to add a tree or shrub this season? With
a rainy winter anticipated, it will make estab-
lishment of root systems easier but with some cau-
tions, mainly this: does the area you plan to plant in
have good drainage, or does water stand for a day or
so afterward? Drainage becomes very important in
winter, because all trees need the help of their leaves
to transpire excess water out of their systems; so
deciduous trees (which lose their leaves in the win-
ter) may not be able to effectively process excess
water in winter, which may cause the roots to rot
rather than grow. Live oaks keep their leaves so are
less affected.

Plants also benefit from mycorrhizal fungi
which attaches to plant roots. Most soils contain
some but live oaks need a highly specific form
which can be purchased only from knowledgeable
local nurseries such as Natural Gardener and a
few others. It's prudent to call and locate some
before excavating.

When your site is selected, place a tarp, old
shower curtain or similar nearby. Take off and
place the first four to six inches of soil onto the
tarp. This soil layer comprises your "soil food web"
containing the beneficial bacteria, fungi, arthro-
pods and other micro-organisms that assist plant
growth and health. NEVER bury this valuable
layer in the planting hole as this will kill the valu-
able life within it to the detriment of your plant.
Once this layer is set aside, you can dig out to
whatever depth you need, keeping in mind that
you want to set the tree or shrub so that it is bur-
ied NO DEEPER than it sits in its pot, or so that
the crown (joining of trunk to root mass) is exactly

Continued on page 8

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About Me:

- I have lived in Allandale my entire life and went to Gullett, Lamar and McCallum
- I have a Business degree from The University of Texas
- I owned Tinka's Dance Studios and taught thousands of Austinites to dance from age 3 to 83 for over three decades
- I still live in Allandale and can be very hands on to help you buy the home of your dreams or sell your home for the best price possible



CNE (Certified Negotiation Expert)

Allandale Outside: Fall & Winter, a Good Time to Plant and Transplant

Continued from page 7

at surrounding soil level. Dig the hole with an irregular shape, not round. In heavy soil, perfectly round holes tend to cause roots to grow around the perimeter thus encircling the existing root system which can cause the roots to choke themselves rather than growing out in all directions. This can prevent the tree from becoming well anchored and from being able to take water and nutrients from a wider area, thus hindering its ability to survive.

Remember that soil will settle after planting, so don't plant too deep. A trick for judging this: using the handle of your spade, measure the depth of the root system in its pot and make a mark on the spade handle, then put the spade in the hole to determine the right depth to set the tree or shrub. (This same technique can be used with a trowel handle for small plants.) If you dug too deep, add a little soil back and press it in place until you have the hole depth just right. Just prior to setting the root ball in place, you can add a light dusting of rock phosphate

OR bone meal. Either of these is an excellent root stimulator (a phosphorous fertilizer needs to be in direct contact with roots so don't mix with soil).

Now set the tree or shrub in place. Before filling in around the root ball, do you need to add COARSE (not play) sand or better yet, expanded shale to assist drainage? If so, mix evenly with the soil you use to refill around the root ball.

DO NOT add any amendments to the planting hole, save the compost and fertilizer as the last step AFTER you've topped off the planting hole with the four to six inches of topsoil containing the "soil food web." Last, add a good ORGANIC fertilizer (approx. 8-2-4 or similar), then a thin (about half an inch) layer of compost. Next, water in with a solution of dilute liquid seaweed (one tablespoon per gallon of water), as this is a gentle root stimulator. Soak the planting area. This can be sufficient if you didn't use rock phosphate or bone meal. But using both will not harm your planting.

Why do I stipulate organic fertilizer rather than a chemical fertilizer? Chemical fertilizers are salt based and water soluble and kill off many of the beneficial organisms in the "soil food web," which is one of many reasons why chemical fertilizers promote brown patch and other detrimental fungal diseases, not to mention run-off causing algal growth and pollution in our rivers and streams.

Lastly, you can apply a thin layer of mulch, leaving a four-inch space between the bark and area where you spread mulch out to a foot or more from the trunk (never put mulch against bark as this will hold too much moisture against the trunk and can cause trunk rot). Come hot weather, mulch can be increased as appropriate, but when we're having a rainy season, allow for some necessary evaporation so soil doesn't stay water-logged. Following this, come spring your tree or shrub should take off and grow vigorously and happily to your ultimate enjoyment. Good luck and happy gardening! ♦

ACT NOW, renew your ANA membership at existing rates before April 1 increase.
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ALLANDALE AREA 2014 PROPERTY SALES YEAR IN REVIEW

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TOTAL TRANSACTIONS	115	98	108
AVG SALES PRICE	\$388,229	\$432,225	\$473,930
AVG DAYS ON MARKET	45	20	32
AVG \$/SQ FT	\$207	\$235	\$255
MAX PRICE SOLD	\$735,000	\$790,000	\$856,250
MIN PRICE SOLD	\$184,500	\$277,500	\$300,000

All statistics & square footage are from Austin MLS for single family residence as of January 7, 2015. For detailed market information about your home contact Jason Heffron, Broker.



JASONHEFFRON.COM

Neighbor Spotlight: Cold Caps Assistance Projects Helps Cancer Patients Keep Hair

Patsy Graham

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2010, one of my biggest concerns was the hair loss caused by chemo. This isn't vanity and I learned I wasn't alone: many men and women share this concern. Some people want to feel normal in between chemo treatments; others want to help their children feel better about Mommy or Daddy being sick; some are just very private people; and some fear they may compromise their jobs.

Hair loss greatly affects a cancer patient's self-esteem, especially women. Some are so averse to losing their hair that they actually refuse to have chemotherapy! "When you lose your hair, you have to face yourself in a different manner. It's a stark reminder that you're going through cancer treatment," explained Dr. Joyce O'Shaughnessy, a medical oncologist at the Sammons Cancer Center at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas.

I had already had one chemotherapy treatment when I learned about Cold Caps, which greatly reduce hair loss by

freezing the capillaries feeding hair follicles to prevent chemo drugs from reaching the follicles. I knew I was going to become bald in a few days but decided to use the Cold Caps from my second chemo treatments to stop any further damage. My hair started growing back in about six weeks and continued to grow during chemo! And it came back with its original texture and color.

Having the unique experience of being bald but growing back my hair during chemo, I knew I had to help others learn about Cold Caps before their chemo started, and to find a way to help those who couldn't afford to rent Penguin Cold Caps (the brand I used and recommend). So I founded the non-profit Cold Caps Assistance Projects (CCAPS) in 2011.



Patsy Graham, founder of Cold Caps Assistance Projects (CCAPS)

The mission of CCAPS is to assist cancer patients in minimizing chemotherapy-related alopecia by using cold caps therapy in the following ways:

- Educating medical professionals and the general public about the existence of cold cap therapy

Continued on page 10

David Starry – Allandale Specialist



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Neighbor Spotlight: Cold Caps Assistance Projects Helps Cancer Patients Keep Hair

Continued from page 9

- Guiding cancer patients in the correct use of cold cap therapy
- Finding companions for cancer patients to assist with cold cap therapy during chemotherapy infusions
- Providing financial assistance to cancer

patients who cannot afford cold cap therapy

Patients in Europe, Israel, and New Zealand and other parts of the world have been using the cooling cap therapy successfully for over 20 years and are very pleased with the results. Moreover, the psychological benefit to the patient can be significant to the recovery process. Although this method has not yet been approved by the FDA, it has not deterred thousands of patients from using it in the U.S., and clinical trials are underway at hospitals across the U.S.

(<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/testing-underway-for-cooling-caps-that-prevent-hair-loss-during-chemotherapy/>).

At the present time, scalp cooling therapy is undergoing FDA approval; and, once approved, insurance companies will be more inclined to cover part of the patient's costs for external

cold caps. In the meantime, my non-profit provides grants, on a case-by-case basis, to patients needing financial support.

Cold Caps Assistance Projects has been helping cancer patients in Austin, San Antonio, Houston and other central Texas cities since 2011 and spread to the entire United States in 2013.

To find out more, visit: <http://www.ccaps.org/> or please contact me, Patsy Graham, at patsy@ccaps.org or by phone: 512-663-3867. We also are always in need of donations, which are fully tax-deductible. These can be made right online at the Donate Now button on the site. And we are already in need of volunteers, both to serve on our board of directors, and/or to help "cap" patients in the Austin area. I'm a proud Allandale resident since 2008 and appreciate your time to learn about a cause very close to my heart— and my head! ❖

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Dog Talk – Dogs and Storms

Lani Steingraph, owner Kids N Cats, Burnet Road

Please remember to be extra cautious with stormy weather and dogs, especially rescue dogs! Even dogs who are normally great with their owners or fine off leash can bolt when scared or nervous. Some even can scale six-foot fences or jump out windows. Many dogs can feel barometric weather changes before a storm hits and can get scared prior to us even seeing the rain/thunder/storms.

If your dog is scared of this type of weather there are many things you can do to help your dog and I will be glad to share what I have studied and learned to help my new rescue dog Gracie who came to me terrified of storms. In fact she wouldn't even go outside in my yard the day after it rained if the grass was still wet! And if so much as I turned a hose on, she would bolt! She saw a sprinkler on about a month ago— and got out of her collar in less than three seconds!

When I got Gracie, a highly nervous beautiful blue heeler/pointer mix from

Austin Animal Center shelter, she had to go through intense heartworm treatment including multiple arsenic shots— and we had to keep her calm for 10 weeks or she could have a blood clot and die.

Wouldn't you know the Memorial Day storms came at the same time! So I began voraciously studying methods to calm her anxiety and fears. I have done all the work myself with her and it is so amazing and gratifying to watch her change from a super high anxiety dog to a much more confident and relaxed dog. Still more to work on, but wow!

Gracie is much better now after all my counter conditioning that I have done with her, and she even took a nice long walk in the rain today outside our shop!

Part of my training with her is to make all water and rain “fun” and a game! We do rain snacks, thunder snacks, garden hose treats, and I offer her yummy food in a plastic container under a sprinkler. All positive reinforcement,

absolutely no negative used. All this helps to reprogram her brain to think that once scary things are now becoming fun and happy exciting things!

Please come by the shop if you'd like to meet Gracie or would like more info on how I help sweet Gracie with her fears. I am always more than happy to share my experiences with her to help other beloved doggies become safer and more confident dogs. And no, I am not a trainer, just a lover of dogs ... and cats of course. Let's help keep animals safe and loved always! ❖

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Gullett Good News

Debbie Trominski

Gullett is a school like no other place and our Geckos are generous! The Socktober clothes drive benefiting our neighbors at Pillow Elementary collected so many donated clothes that 10 vehicles were needed to drop off all the boxes at Pillow. Many students participating in the No Place for Hate Coalition, as well as several scouts, tirelessly sorted the clothing to get it ready for the trip to Pillow. In other generous news, our PTA donated \$1000 from the Fall Fest proceeds to the teachers at Palm Elementary who lost supplies that they paid for personally in the Halloween floods.

For the first time, Gullett

had a gratitude turkey on display. A large turkey on a bulletin board in the entryway was surrounded by hundreds of feathers created by Gullett families. These feathers were festively decorated by showing things that our families are grateful for. It looked great and the project was a success. Here's to many more years of a meaningful school community tradition.

Pre-K teacher James Butler was selected to play the role of Mother Ginger in Ballet Austin's Nutcracker at the December 6 performance. The ballet selects a person of local importance for each performance of the show to make an appearance as Mother Ginger. Bravo to Mr. Butler for earning this recognition! You may recall that only a few short years ago school librarian, Kay Gooch was voted in to play Mother

Ginger with a record-breaking amount of votes. The Nutcracker force is strong at our school. Gullett is very fortunate to have teachers that make an impact both in school and in the greater community.

Box Tops are everywhere! Next time you grab a package in your kitchen look for the small Box Top label, cut it out, and drop it off in the front office at Gullett. For every Box Top turned in the school earns 10 cents. This can really add up. So far this year Gullett has earned nearly \$600 through conscientious Box Top clipping!

Well, it's time to wind down and celebrate the end of a successful fall semester and enjoy winter break. Rest up Geckos, this spring is going to be busy and fun!

To keep on top of all the good stuff happening at Gul-



James Butler as Mother Ginger

lett, check out GullettGeckos.com.

Upcoming Events:

December 21 through January 4 – Winter Holiday Break
January 5 – Classes resume
January 18 – MLK Day, no class
February 15 – Presidents Day, no class ❖



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More Gullett Good News: Girl Scout Troops Are Growing!

Laura Beck

Gullett has long been a strong supporter of Girl Scouting. The eight active troops serving first through fifth grades provide opportunities for girls to learn confidence and character as they make the world a better place. These troops have been joined by three new troops serving kindergarten girls. This means that there are more than 150 girls in Girl Scouts at Gullett! And thanks to Gullett for supporting the troops by providing meeting space and oppor-

tunities for service projects.

The Allandale neighborhood also houses girls who are members of troops at Highland Park Elementary School (six troops) and St. Louis Catholic School (10 troops).

What you may not know is that Girl Scouting continues after elementary school. Girls graduate to middle and high school, and their troops often continue, allowing girls the opportunity to provide service to their communities, participate in high adventure treks, and travel around the world. Our Gullett, Highland Park, and St. Louis troop girls have graduated to middle and high school and continue to participate in another 10 or so troops. About 90 Allandale

middle and high school girls are in these troops.

These Allandale-based troops are all part of the Midtown Service Unit serving a total of 600 girls and 500 adults. You'll see the girls out in the January/February timeframe selling cookies, as well as a great gathering of them at the annual Fourth of July

parade. The Service Unit provides activities and resources to all the Girl Scouts in the area and was directed for many years by long-time Allandale resident Donna Zinsmeyer. The current director is another long-time Allandale resident, Karen Miller.

Prepare your waist lines for Girl Scout cookie season now! ❖

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All About Lamar

Gina Ross

It has been a busy first semester at Lamar Middle School and Fine Arts Academy. Students have been active in a variety of academic, sports, fine arts and club activities. Twelve students represented Lamar in the All City Choir. Advanced dance students attended the Showstopper Dance Convention in Dallas. Eleven of our Lamar Musicians were chosen for the prestigious All-Region Band and will participate in a public concert on December 12! Way to go Scotties!

Parents, teachers and administrators gathered for an important CAC (Campus Advisory Committee) meeting in the cafeteria on November 9. District officials were in attendance to address community concerns about overcrowding at Lamar. We will look forward to more updates as



AISD works with Mr. Llewellyn to identify solutions to this issue.

Thanks so much to our community, sponsors and volunteers for an amazing LamarFest. The event was a huge success and that success would not have been possible without all of YOU! Thanks for supporting Lamar.

Theater and Choir students are busy rehearsing for our spring musical, Cinderella. Rehearsals are well underway and the performances are looking great. Look for Cinderella February 24 through 27, 2016!

Read more about the Lamar Jazz Factory later in this issue.

Happy Holidays to all of you from all of us! We can't wait to see what the New Year brings to our Lamar community! ❖

It's Knight Time – McCallum Updates

Jill Whiteside Schavrdra

First semester finals:
December 15, 16, 17, 18
Late start dates: January 14
and January 28

Winter Break: December
21 – January 1

Staff Development: January 4 and 15

Martin Luther King Day: January 18

General Calendar Link: <http://www.austinschools.org/campus/mccallum/2015-2016%20AUSTIN%20ISD%20CALENDAR.pdf>

Austin Symphony Orchestra in-school concert in MAC January 19 9:00–11:30 a.m.

Fine Arts Dates:

January 5 – 15, 2016: Applications for the 2016-2017 school year will be accepted

TOUR McCallum High School & Fine Arts Academy (advance registration required!) Current eighth and ninth grad-



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ers interested in applying to the McCallum Fine Arts Academy in January 2016, this is for you! Register on Eventbrite (link below) – tours fill up fast! First come, first served! <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tour-mccallum-fine-arts-academy-registration-18723643923>

Tour Dates: January 7, 8 and 12, from 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Friends of McCallum Fine Arts Academy meetings– McCallum HS Cafeteria January 11 and February 15, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

January 5, 6:00– 8:00 p.m.: Band area recital in Fine Arts Building Theater (FABT)

January 16, 7:00–10:00 p.m.: Fashion show performance

January 28, 6:00–8:00 p.m.: Teacher pageant in MAC

January 29, 7:00–9:00: Choir concert in MAC

January 30, 5:00–10:00 p.m.: Mardie

Grazie in cafeteria and MAC
February 9, 7:00–9:00 p.m.: Full orchestra in FABT

Fine Arts calendar link: http://www.austinschools.org/campus/mccallum/fine_arts/calendar.htm

Sports Dates:

Basketball:

December 18: Boys at Reagan Fresh 5:30 p.m., JV 6:30 p.m., V 8:00 p.m.

December 18: Girls Basketball vs Reagan at McCallum 5:30 p.m., JV, 7:00 p.m.

December 22: Boys Basketball vs LBJ at McCallum Fresh 12:00 JV 1:30, V 3:00

December 29–30: Boys basketball at San Antonio Tournament, Southwest

January 5: Boys Basketball vs Travis at McCallum Fresh 5:30, JV 6:30, V 8:00

January 5: Girls Basketball at Travis 5:30 F, 6:30 JV, 8:00 V

January 8: Boys Basketball at Cedar Creek Fresh 5:30, JV 6:30, V 8:00

January 8: Girls Basketball vs Cedar Creek

at McCallum 5:30 F, 6:30 JV, 8:00 V
January 12: Boys Basketball at Crockett Fresh 5:30, JV 6:30, V 8:00

January 12: Girls Basketball vs Crockett at McCallum 5:30 F, 6:30 JV, 8:00 V

January 15: Boys Basketball vs Lanier at McCallum Fresh 5:30, JV 6:30, V 8:00

January 15: Girls Basketball at Lanier 5:30 F, 6:30 JV, 8:00 V

Wrestling:

December 19: wrestling at Doc Hes Classic at Bryan HS

January 6 7:00–9:00 p.m.: JV Wrestling vs Crockett at McCallum

January 8 & 9: wrestling at Centex Invitational at Delco

January 13: wrestling vs LBJ/Reagan at Reagan

January 16: wrestling at Russ Pederson Tournament at SA Johnson

Overall McCallum Sports Schedule link: [http://www.maxpreps.com/high-schools/mccallum-knights-\(austin,tx\)/home.htm](http://www.maxpreps.com/high-schools/mccallum-knights-(austin,tx)/home.htm) ❖

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Neighborhood Watch

Laura DiCarlo, ANA Safety Chair, lhdicarlo@yahoo.com

Since the October newsletter activities in which the Safety Committee has been engaged:

- Cleaned up and reported graffiti at the PONY field
- Investigated the possibility of a hybrid pedestrian beacon on Burnet Rd. near Twin Oaks
- Learned of and disseminated crime and safety information
- Attended a Region 1 Commander's Forum at McCallum HS
- Worked with a resident and officials to get the Union Pacific Railroad and the city to mow along Great Northern Blvd.

Crime Stats

Since the October newsletter there have been six Burglary of Residences (BORs) and two attempted BORs. Two of them occurred in the 2300 West North Loop apartment complex, as did one of the burglary of vehicles (BOVs). Looking at

the crime data over the years that apartment building comes up often, so I'm going to reach out to management regarding a Neighborhood Watch program.

In one of the BORs a rock was thrown through a back window of a home on McElroy and important documents as well as other small items were taken. The perpetrator(s) ransacked the house, raided a medicine cabinet, and took a spare set of keys. Construction tools were stolen from an unoccupied home nearby being remodeled on Whitepine, prompting McElroy residents who organized last year when concerned about several incidents on their street to reach out for help. Our APD District Representative Officer Josh Metteauer responded by offering directed patrols, which means he or others will purposely drive a patrol car on McElroy and the surrounding area when able. Skylark, which is in that same part of Allandale, was hit with a BOR and BOV as well.

An attempted BOR on Wilbur occurred when a perpetrator tried to kick in a front door (damage was seen later but entry was not gained), and a package was stolen from a front porch on Elise.

In one of the BORs a newspaper was left in the driveway, which was a giveaway the residents weren't home.

Please be vigilant, keep valuables, extra keys, and important documents hidden and locked if possible. Install three-inch screws in the strike plates of all your outer doors, and if you see a newspaper that has not been picked up from a neighbor's home please secure it close to their front door or in a place they can easily find it but a passerby won't notice it. If you are expecting packages when you are away ask a neighbor to collect them for you, and likewise, if see a package on a neighbor's porch and you know they are not home think about securing it for them until they return. This is especially important during the holidays when many gifts are delivered.

Since the last newsletter there have been 11 BOVs. Two of them were wallets or purses stolen out of cars at NW park, one was a wallet stolen from a vehicle parked at the strip mall on Anderson where Wal-mart is located), one occurred in the Suzi's parking lot, and four were at apartment complexes. Don't leave a purse, wallet, computer, or other valuables showing in your vehicle.

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sun 10-3

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)

Now that Lick and other new places are opening on the east side of Burnet, folks are looking for a place to cross between Justin and Wynona. A resident on Park View reached out to the developers of the apartments still under construction on Burnet there, and found they were willing to put forth \$25,000 towards the \$75,000 cost of a PHB, which is a light on demand crossing like the one just north of St. Louis Church on Burnet. After putting in a request for a PHB with the city to get the ball rolling, I learned from COA arterial manager Renee Orr that the needed engineering study can be privately funded as can the \$75,000. However, the \$50,000 gap led the resident to suggest we just wait a couple of years when the project makes its way up in the city's queue. Although I was disappointed, I received correspondence from a home owner on Twin Oaks that Burnet is clogged enough and doesn't need any more lights. Her opinion was that Austin residents shouldn't have to pay for the growth we did not invite. Past ANA president Allan McMurtry, who focuses on zoning issues, also voiced concern about traffic flow on Burnet if a pedestrian light was added hastily, and said we should wait for the Burnet Corridor Study to try to determine such uses. Words to chew on.

Commander's Forum

The focus of the October 13 Commander's Forum was to connect with our District Reps, and during the break-out session I met with Officer Mettteauer and a few other Allandale residents. APD asked us to encourage folks to go into policing because they are having a hard time recruiting with the national image of police being so negative currently.

Listserv and Citizen Input

The topic of crime/safety came up on the Allandale list-serv in these areas:

- Illegal construction dumping
- Stolen package on Elise
- Suspicious person
- Possible speed mitigation on Shoal Creek and speeding on Great Northern Blvd.

Janker posted about construction waste dumped in the area behind Marilyn off of Great Northern Blvd. and White Rock. A resident recognized the t-shaped clothes line post which might have come from a home that was demolished in Allandale. If she is right, what probably happened was the contractor paid by the home owner had too much waste for what he was legally allowed to dispose. Hopefully this crime will be solved to help deter others.

As always, please contact me with questions, concerns, or if you are interested in getting involved with the safety committee. You can become a block captain, help remove graffiti, patrol, help plan and run the Take 10 CPR training each February, and more!

Our APD District Representative:

Officer Josh Mettteauer #5357, Austin Police Department
Region 1 (Baker) District Representatives
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"The Water Bill Is Too Damn High!"

Robert Mace

Jimmy McMillan, in his bid for mayor of New York, formed a political party called "The Rent Is Too Damn High!" If Jimmy lived in Austin this past summer, he might have formed a party called "The Water Bill Is Too Damn High!" And based on how much the local interwebs have buzzed about high water bills this summer, he might have had rabid support. Concerns about high water bills led to newspaper articles, TV interviews, and even city council hearings with accusations of malfunctioning and misread meters and a city conspiracy to gouge residents. While all of this is possible (almost anything is possible, after all) and, in some cases, errors were made by the meter readers, an alternative (and more likely) hypothesis is that some people simply used more water in August than they've used in recent years and that this use occurred under a more expensive rate structure.

Austin's water meters are still read the old-fashioned way: By people popping

open covers and inspecting the meter. Given that it's a human reading your meter, the readings are subject to human error. If you are convinced your bill is in error, you can call the city and have them re-read the meter. You might also be able to do this yourself by locating your water meter (generally at the curb) and reading it yourself (sadly, ours requires a special tool to open the vault).

But what about the recent rash of high water bills in August and September? Interestingly, this was not just an Austin phenomenon. Communities all along the Interstate 35 corridor reported higher than normal water bills. What's going on?

First, let's do a quick tutorial on Austin water use. Between 2004 and 2011, an average Austin household used 265 gallons per day with about 176 gallons for indoor use and 89 gallons for outdoor use. On a percentage basis, that means we use about 70% of our water indoors and 30% outdoors (it turns out these percent-

ages also hold for an average Texan as well as an average American). However, these numbers are averaged over the whole year. In reality, outdoor use is focused in the summer months with total use generally twice as much during the summer than during the winter. Therefore, an average Austin household uses about 176 gallons per day in the winter and 352 gallons per day in the summer. Depending on the weather, usage during the summer can be more focused than that. A friend of mine in south Austin uses more than four times as much water in August than in January.

Indeed, summer usage can really peak when it hasn't rained in a while, such as this past year when we received less than 30 percent of normal rainfall for June through August, the fourth lowest rainfall total for those months since 1938. And perhaps Mother Nature teased us with more-than-ample rains in the spring such that we wanted to keep things green and we thought that perhaps the drought



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restrictions had been lifted (once-a-week watering is still in place).

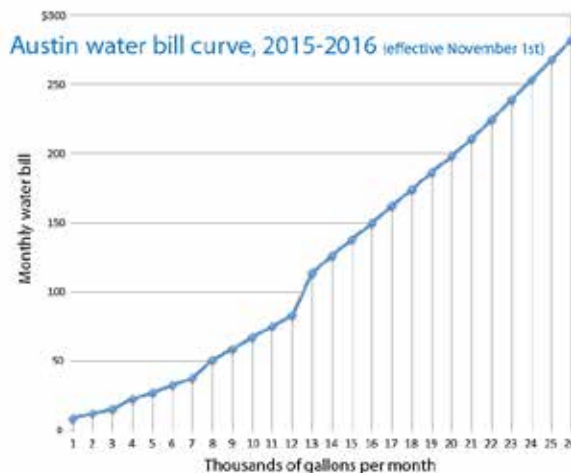
The other piece of the puzzle is water rates. They have gone up. A lot. A sad irony of drought restrictions is that as water usage goes down, so do billing receipts. Because a water utility has a lot of fixed costs (staff, infrastructure, bond payments), they often raise rates to compensate, generally increasing customer and fixed charges and raising the cost of water, especially for the higher rate tiers. For an average household (using about 100 gallons per person per day), an Austinite's water bill increased 31% between 2014 and 2015. Between 2010 and 2015, that bill more than doubled! And if you looked closely at the fliers included with your water bill in November, rates have gone up again.

When drought is but a memory, will rates go back down? Probably not. Once a community gets used to getting by with less water, water usage will come back up but usually not to pre-drought levels (a phenomenon known in the business as a "drought shadow"). For example, your neighbor that tore out her turf and now has xeriscaping won't be using as much

water when the rains return. Furthermore, the city is discussing making once-a-week watering permanent. And furthermore, the population of Travis County is expected to double to two million people by 2060. New people equals new infrastructure, and that ain't cheap.

I didn't write this article to be a rabble-rouser. Our household usage for the two of us (including three cats) is about 50 gallons per day, a mere quarter of what an average Austin home would use. Our August water bill, in the thick of all the hooting and hollering, was all of \$14.08. How'd we do it? Efficient fixtures and xeriscaping with rainwater harvesting (resulting in no outdoor use of city water). Don't tell anyone, but I even washed my car this past summer in my driveway—with 10 gallons of rainwater.

A good way to counteract rising water costs is to use less water, and the city has



Here is the water bill curve for 2015-2016 that I made using the new rate structure.

many programs to financially incentivize less use through fixture, xeriscaping, and rainwater harvesting programs. Perhaps instead of creating the "The Water Bill Is Too Damn High!" party in Austin in response to high water bills, Mr. McMillan would see the light of conservation and create the "Your Water Use Is Too Damn High!" party. Now there's a party serving my kind of punch! ❖

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Shoal Creek Conservancy Hosts Fall Walking Tours

Angela Caras

In October, the newly-formed Shoal Creek Conservancy held its first in a series of fall walking tours along Shoal Creek. The group was led by Jeff Henke, a geoscientist and Shoal Creek expert, and covered topics ranging from geology to hydrology to water quality. About 30 people attended, mostly from the many Central Austin neighborhoods adjoining Shoal Creek (and yes, Allandale was represented as well!). While described as a “walking” tour, the event was quite relaxed and not very walking intensive: it started at the south entrance to Seider Springs Park, continued to the springs themselves, then back south to a crossing near the gazebo, then finally to a creek-bank near the gazebo, where plenty of fossils could be found. The Conservancy



held several more tours in the fall, including behind-the-scenes looks at what is going on behind the barriers at the south end of the creek and opportunities to learn about native and invasive species along the creek. The Conservancy has many more events planned in the next few months as well— check out their calendar at <http://www.shoalcreekconservancy.org/events/>. ❖

Allandale Neighbors Top Trojan Pop Warner Scholar Athletes!

Laura Beck

Trojan Pop Warner football and cheerleading finished a fun fall season recently and had over 50 students who qualified to be Pop Warner All American Scholars in the 2014-15 school year. To qualify as a Pop Warner All American, a GPA of over 96% is required. Qualifications are for JPW and PW levels only. Congrats to football players Brock Fanning, Mack Fanning, Johan Holmes, Fred McCoy, Braeden Price, Valentino Rodriguez and Rylan Varela, and cheerleader Thea Cahoon.

We also congratulate Gullett Geckos Max Honea, Asher Kay and Owen Price, who were part of the Trojan Pop Warner Mitey Might team that won the Central Texas Pop Warner Division 1 Championship of the six teams in that division. ❖

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Lamar's Jazz Factory is Chicago Bound

Clair Melton

We all want our children to be intelligent, self-confident, disciplined, creative, productive people. As involved parents, we combine our own life experiences with the opinions of experts to enable our children to flourish. When my daughter was born in the early 1990s, many infant toys were starting to be produced in black and white, rather than in the traditional pastels, owing to research from the previous decade on infant vision, fixation and tracking. Her preschool was a small, neighborhood Montessori school, full of activities and early reading that promote curiosity and investigation—building stones for a life of learning.

And then there was the music. Do you remember hearing about “the Mozart effect”? In the 1990s, a series of studies made their way into mainstream media, eventually being absorbed into that body of shared knowledge that we call conven-

tional wisdom. While the details were sometimes misunderstood or inaccurate (no, listening to Mozart does not raise your IQ), the general idea was sound: regularly listening to music that is organized like Mozart's capacitates our brain to more easily comprehend other types of spatial relationships. Indeed, the brain/music connection continues to be borne out in ongoing studies, demonstrating that playing music augments functions such as reasoning, memory and language skills.

To be honest, as the child of musicians, it would have been pretty difficult for my daughter to have avoided some level of music education. But something was missing. At the small private school that she attended from seventh grade on, there was no band program. Her father and I had been in music ensembles of various kinds since we were young children. Obviously this was something we valued, something we wanted for our child. We understood firsthand the host of developmental positives identified by behavioral science, including self-discipline, craftsmanship, cooperative production and supported risk-taking.

Life handed me a surprise a few years ago, and now I am raising a son. Like so many Allandale families, we are aware of and thankful for our wonderful neighborhood public schools. My son was a happy camper at Gullett. This is his second year at Lamar Middle School, which just a few years ago became a Fine Arts Academy—a distinction that McCallum High School has held for over 20 years. How wonderful for us that, while so many public schools are afflicted with the devaluing of music education brought on by budget cuts, our Allandale schools emphasize and specialize in the arts!

For this parent, the band program at Lamar Middle School is a true blessing. The Beginning Band serves as the introductory step for all sixth graders, but even these raw musicians are award winners, achieving a superior rating at the 2015 Texas Music Festival, and being named Overall Outstanding Band. The next step comes in seventh grade with Symphonic Band and Symphonic Winds, which both regularly receive Superior ratings at the University Interscholastic League regional contests.



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Another ensemble that LMS band students can audition for is the Jazz Factory. Because this group is small, it contains some of the best instrumentalists at the school. In addition to five saxophones, five trombones and five trumpets, there is a vocalist and rhythm section— piano, bass, guitar, drum set and percussion. Students learn various styles of jazz for both written-out charts and improvised solos. The list of honors for this ensemble is impressive. Last year they travelled to Florida to participate in Festival Disney, where they received a superior rating, were designated best in class, and were awarded first place— the Gold Mickey Award. They were the 2015 National Winners in the Mark of Excellence contest of The Foundation For Music Education. And in both 2014 and 2015 they were the Grand Champions at the Georgetown Jazz Festival.

At the helm of the band program is Mr. James Hairston, who has been teaching at Lamar for eight years. Holding a Masters of Music in Saxophone Performance from the University of Texas, Mr. Hairston is a seasoned performer, and he instills in his students a drive to excel at their craft. Like so many effective educators, he imparts the



tools they need both explicitly and through an osmosis-like saturation.


This month, the LMS Jazz Factory is travelling to Chicago to perform at the 69th annual Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, widely regarded as one of the best music, band and orchestra clinics in the world. Bands perform by invitation, and the Jazz Factory is the only band in Austin that was selected. Of the seven jazz bands invited, only one other is a middle school band, making the Jazz Factory some of the youngest jazz musicians to perform there. Indeed, Mr. Hairston takes pride in having the band tackle arrangements intended for high school and college bands. He wants his students to have fun, but also to feel that sense of accomplishment that comes from



aiming high and achieving your goals.

The Jazz Factory had their send-off concert on Wednesday, December 2 at the Performing Arts Center at Mueller, and they held a fundraising dinner concert on Friday, December 11. Then they will be off to Chicago! More performances are scheduled in the new year, so whether you have young children and would like to “interview” the band program, or you simply would like to hear some good live jazz, I hope that you take advantage of this wonderful asset that we are so very fortunate to have right here in our neighborhood.


Follow the LMS band program on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lamarscottieband>. ❖



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